

What is claimed is:

1. A system for anonymously purchasing goods and services over the Internet comprising:

a communications system;

a customer computer linked to said communications system;

5 an issuer computer linked to said communications system;

a merchant computer linked to said communications system;

a financial institution computer linked to said communications system;

a money code;

10 software executing on said issuer computer for receiving said money code and a money amount from a customer, assigning an associated money value to said money code based on said money amount received from the customer, and transmitting said money code and associated money value to said financial institution computer over said communications system;

15 software executing on said financial institution computer for receiving said money code and associated money value transmitted by said issuer computer and storing said money code and associated money value;

software executing on said customer computer for transmitting an order and said money code to said merchant computer over said communications system;

20 software executing on said merchant computer for receiving said order and money code from said customer computer, determining a money amount due for said order, and transferring said money code and money amount due to said financial institution computer over said communications system, and,

25 software executing on said financial institution computer for receiving said money code and money amount due from said merchant computer, comparing said money amount due to said associated money value, and notifying said merchant computer of fund availability.

2. The system of Claim 1 further comprising software executing on said customer computer for generating said money code and storing said money code on a storage device.

3. The system of Claim 2 further comprising software executing on said customer computer for generating a personal identification code to be associated with said money code for controlling access and use of said money code

4. The system of Claim 3 further comprising software executing on said customer computer for encrypting said money code based on said personal identification code prior to storing said money code on said storage device.

5. The system of Claim 4 further comprising software executing on said customer computer for requesting said personal identification code from the customer, retrieving said money code from said storage device, and decrypting said money code based on said personal identification code prior to transmitting said money code to said merchant computer.

6. The system of Claim 4 further comprising:

software executing on said merchant computer for requesting said personal identification code from the customer upon receipt of said order and money code;

5 software executing on said customer computer for requesting said personal identification code from the customer and transmitting said personal identification code to said merchant computer;

10 software executing on said merchant computer for receiving said personal identification code from the customer and transmitting said personal identification code in addition to the money code and money amount due to said financial institution computer over said communications system; and,

software executing on said financial institution computer for receiving said money code, money amount due, and personal identification code and decrypting said money code using said personal identification code prior to determining fund availability.

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7. The system of Claim 1 wherein said communications system comprises the Internet.

8. The system of Claim 7 further comprising software executing on said merchant computer for operating and maintaining an Internet website, accessible by the customer, for facilitating commercial transactions between the customer and a merchant.

9. A system for anonymously purchasing goods and services over the Internet comprising:

- a communications system;
- a customer computer linked to said communications system;
- an issuer computer linked to said communications system;
- a merchant computer linked to said communications system;
- a financial institution computer linked to said communications system;
- a money code;

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software executing on said issuer computer for receiving a money amount from a customer, generating said money code, assigning an associated money value to said money code based on said money amount received from the customer, presenting said money code to the customer, and transferring said money code and associated money value to said financial institution computer over said communications system;

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15 software executing on said financial institution computer for receiving said money code and associated money value transmitted by said issuer computer and storing said money code and associated money;

software executing on said customer computer for transmitting an order and said money code to said merchant computer over said communications  
20 system;

software executing on said merchant computer for receiving said order and money code from said customer computer, determining a money amount due for said order, transferring said money code and money amount due to said financial institution computer over said communications system, and,

25 software executing on said financial institution computer for receiving said money code and money amount due from said merchant computer, comparing said money amount due to said associated money value, and notifying said merchant computer of fund availability.

10. The system of Claim 9 further comprising software executing on said customer computer for receiving said money code and storing said money code on a storage device.

11. The system of Claim 10 further comprising software executing on said customer computer for generating a personal identification code to be associated with said money code for controlling access and use of said money code

12. The system of Claim 11 further comprising software executing on said customer computer for encrypting said money code based on said personal identification code prior to storing said money code on said storage device.

13. The system of Claim 12 further comprising software executing on said customer computer for requesting said personal identification code from the

customer, retrieving said money code from said storage device, and decrypting  
said money code based on said personal identification code prior to transmitting  
5 said money code to said merchant computer.

14. The system of Claim 12 further comprising:

software executing on said merchant computer for requesting said  
personal identification code from the customer upon receipt of said order and  
money code;

5 software executing on said customer computer for requesting said  
personal identification code from the customer and transmitting said personal  
identification code to said merchant computer;

software executing on said merchant computer for receiving said personal  
identification code from the customer and transmitting said personal identification  
10 code, in addition to said money code and money amount due to said financial  
institution computer over said communications system; and,

software executing on said financial institution computer for receiving said  
money code, money amount due, and personal identification code and  
decrypting the money code using said personal identification code prior to  
15 determining fund availability.

15. The system of Claim 9 wherein said communications system comprises the  
Internet.

16. The system of Claim 15 further comprising software executing on said merchant computer for operating and maintaining an Internet website, accessible by the customer, for facilitating commercial transactions between the customer and a merchant.

17. A method for anonymously purchasing goods and services over the Internet comprising:

assigning an associated money value to a money code corresponding to a money amount surrendered to an issuer by a customer,

5       inputting said money code and associated money value into said issuer computer;

transmitting said money code and associated money value from said issuer computer to a financial institution computer over a communications system,

10       storing said money code and associated money value on said financial institution computer,

transmitting an order and said money code from a customer computer to said merchant computer over said communications system,

15       transmitting said money code and a money amount due from said merchant computer to said financial institution computer over said communications system,

verifying fund availability by comparing said money amount due to said associated money value on said financial institution computer.